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**NEWS from U.S. Senator**

**PATTY MURRAY**

**Washington State**

USCG-2003-14749-27

**Statement by Sen. Patty Murray on New Maritime Security Act Proposal**

For Immediate Release: Tuesday, July 1, 2003

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Today the U.S. Coast Guard proposed a new interim rule for the Maritime Security Act to govern passenger vessel security across the country, including ferries. The announcement of the interim rule begins a 30-day comment period during which the Coast Guard will receive feedback from stakeholders about its proposal. The Final Rule should come out on October 25. Ferry systems will then have until July 2004 to develop their vessel security plans to comply with the Final Rule.

***Sen. Murray released the following statement:***

“In the post 9/11 environment, vigilance is essential. We have had to reevaluate the way we do business throughout our transportation system. We have stepped up security at airports and at seaports, and today the Coast Guard has established an interim rule for security on ferries.

When word leaked out in October 2002 that a burdensome new security regime at our ferries was imminent, I contacted the Coast Guard to insist that any new plan must consider local input. With 26 million riders in Washington state each year, ferries are not a luxury, they are an essential mode of transportation. They are a route to and from work for thousands of people.

Today the Coast Guard has addressed many of these concerns. The Coast Guard has consulted with Washington State Ferries and the Washington State Patrol to develop this interim security plan.

The proposal has abandoned the one-size-fits all approach that might not work for a system as large and complex as the Washington state ferry system. Because of local input, the Coast Guard moved toward a more flexible plan which will ensure security, while keeping passengers moving.

Over the next month, I trust the Coast Guard will continue to work with local stakeholders to resolve any outstanding concerns.

Last month, Washington State Ferries received \$9 million in Congressional funding to improve security. I am proud to have played a lead role in Congress in securing federal grants for our ferries and our ports. This federal funding is critical for implementing the new measures that will ensure our ferries are safe and secure.”

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